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# AFTER SIXTEEN YEARS OF SILENCE

(On Trotsky's article: "DID STALIN POISON LENIN?")

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LENINIST LEAGUE, U.S.A.  
P.O. Box 67 Sta. D.  
New York

A F T E R S I X T E E N Y E A R S O F S I L E N C E  
(On Trotsky's article: "DID STALIN POISON LENIN?")

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Writing more than sixteen years after the death of Lenin, Trotsky in his recent article, "DID STALIN POISON LENIN?", makes the shocking allegation that many signs point to an affirmative answer to the question he raises. In his article, he relates that he was present when Stalin - as Trotsky implies - cooked up a fish story about having been asked by Lenin to give him poison. Trotsky further reveals that Lenin was actually recovering toward the end of 1923, (i.e., just prior to his death in January 1924), and that his death puzzled his physicians who apparently could not account for it. Stalin, says Trotsky, took care of the disposal of Lenin's remains. The physicians for "political" reasons, Trotsky indicates, refrained from searching Lenin's body for poison. From every angle, the story Trotsky tells is one of the most startling that has marked the rise of Stalinism.

Trotsky gives no explanation of why he kept to himself for so many years the astounding facts he now reveals. He merely publishes them without drawing the slightest connection between this aspect of Stalinism and the whole story of the rise of Stalinism. Trotsky makes not the slightest reference to his many years of shouting that Stalinism is based on the "theory" of socialism in one country, when here he plainly indicates that Stalinism is actually based on a bloody conspiracy for bureaucratic power, a criminal plot that possibly involved the murder of Lenin.

Trotsky's article is only an affirmation of the contention of the LENINIST LEAGUE that Stalinism is based not on some "theory" but on a monstrous crime, a plot on the part of certain renegade leaders of the Bolshevik Party to usurp power in Party and State. It is necessary to review the general historical picture connected with the unprecedented charges made by Trotsky against Stalin.

Under the pressure of events, Trotsky from time to time has revealed small and scattered bits of fact concerning the real nature of the Stalinist degeneration of the Russian Communist Party. His expulsion from the Soviet Union in 1929 ooked from him his autobiography, MY LIFE, in which for the first time Trotsky disclosed his knowledge that the basis and origin of the bureaucratic degeneration was a conspiracy to usurp power in Party and State. The recent attempt on his life and the assassination of his secretary, Harte, have brought from Trotsky another piece of information as to what was going on amongst the renegades who composed the Politburo of the R.C.P. in the absence of Lenin due to illness. The criminal conspiratorial character of the Stalinist development is sharply indicated in his article, "DID STALIN POISON LENIN?"

Stalin was the center of a huge monster of bureaucratic conniving and corruption against whom Lenin was preparing a fierce battle. "The last period of Lenin's life was filled with intonso conflict between him and Stalin, which culminated in a complete break between them." (DID STALIN POISON LENIN? in Liberty, Aug. 10, 1940, p. 23.) In December 1922, Lenin "opened fire against Stalin's persecutions." (ibid.) Perceiving that he was threatened by a battle with Lenin, Stalin took characteristic counter-measures. "In the middle of December, 1922, Lenin's health obliged him to absent himself from conference. Stalin at once hid from Lenin much information. Measures of blockade were instituted against persons closest to Lenin." (ibid., p. 24.) The conspiracy of Stalin and his fol-

low-renegades to usurp power was consciously directed against the toiling masses and, naturally, the Stalin clique had to take strong steps against the most conscious leader of the masses, Lenin. Another blow from Lenin, this time the call for the removal of Stalin from the post of General Secretary, soon followed in the form of a letter which came to be known as the "Testament." This move of Lenin's drove Stalin to desperation, for it struck at Stalin's key instrument in the plot to entrench himself permanently in power, namely, his ability as General Secretary to appoint a tremendous host of bribed flunkys who would serve him as the material basis of his plot of usurpation. Trotsky writes that "When Stalin first read the text he broke out into billingsgate against Lenin. The testament not only failed to terminate the internal struggle, which was what Lenin wanted, but enhanced it to a feverish pitch. Stalin could no longer doubt that Lenin's return to activity would mean his own political death. Only Lenin's death could clear the way for him." (ibid., our emphasis.) The issue was clearly joined. Either the elimination of Lenin, or the elimination of Stalin - these were the only possible alternatives in the situation of January 1923, the period of the writing of the "Testament." Death to Leninism, or death to Stalinist renegacy - such was the picture seen by the bureaucratic conspirators as they clung like vultures to the trail of Lenin's physicians eagerly awaiting the news of Lenin's finish.

To the horror of the renegade plotters, toward the end of 1923 Lenin began to recover his health. "Toward winter he began to improve slowly, to move about more freely; he listened to reading and read himself; his faculty of speech began to come back to him. The findings of the physicians became increasingly more hopeful." (ibid., p. 25.) In his autobiography, MY LIFE, Trotsky indicates that this recovery took place markedly in December 1923, (see page 510 where in a letter from Krupskaya it is stated that "about one month before his death" Lenin was again able to read.) At the end of 1923, therefore, the bureaucratic conspirators faced a fearful situation. Lenin's recovery meant an investigation of their crimes. And what crimes these renegades had to their "credit" by December 1923!

They had converted the R.C.P. into a happy hunting-ground for every toady willing to lick their boots for a piece of bureaucratic pie. They had bureaucratically strangled the smaller independent soviet republics, in the first instance Georgia and the Ukraine. Above all, they had betrayed the German proletariat. Dreading the spread of proletarian revolution which necessarily would cut the ground from under their plot for bureaucratic personal power, the Stalinist conspirators, in order to crush any such development, foisted a line of coalition with the treacherous Social-Democracy upon the revolutionary proletariat of Germany in September-October 1923. This was the first ultra-right zigzag engineered by the Stalinized "Comintern." The stab having been delivered, the Stalin clique immediately proceeded to cover it up with a putsch in Hamburg and some other parts of Germany, thus beginning the first ultra-left maneuver of the Stalinized "Comintern." The German workers, who by the millions followed the Stalinist Party of Germany, imagining it to be a genuine revolutionary force, were utterly paralyzed and their vanguard was annihilated by the bourgeois military and fascist cutthroats.

The instigators of these crimes knew that they would have to pay the penalty if they were exposed. By the end of 1923, the recovery of Lenin and his re-entrance into political activity would have meant a revolutionary tribunal and a firing squad for the Stalin clique and its collaborators. "Stalin was after power, all of it, come what might," writes Trotsky in his article, "DID STALIN POISON LENIN?" Trotsky raises the question of whether Stalin, faced by annihilation in the event of Lenin's re-

covery, resorted to assassinating Lenin as a self-protective measure. Not making a direct and unequivocal accusation, Trotsky gives strong indications that he knows Stalin did poison Lenin. Stalin's allies, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Bukharin, it is further intimated by Trotsky, also had this knowledge. At that point Trotsky brings his article to a close.

That, however, is not the end of the story of the probable assassination of Lenin by the Stalinist conspirators. As usual, Trotsky is careful not to reveal his own role in the Stalinist conspiracy. Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev, forming the "Troika," and their allies such as Bukharin, Radek, Kalinin, Dzerzhinsky, Molotov, Ordzhonikidze, Kuibyshev and Voroshilov, were not the only plotters who had cause to fear Lenin's recovery and who would profit by Lenin's death. In this respect, Trotsky himself, as history proves, was made of the same cloth as these renegades.

To Lenin in private discussions, Trotsky had given the impression that he intended to conduct a Leninist struggle against the Stalin clique of conspirators. (See MY LIFE, page 479.) But Trotsky's actual conduct was something quite different.

Himself a person of great political power in those days, Trotsky set himself the policy of collaborating with the Stalin clique along lines which would entrench the top leaders of the R.C.P., including Trotsky, in positions of permanent power. Objective evidence\* proves that Trotsky was thoroughly involved in an effort to establish a kind of collective bureaucratic leadership consisting primarily of himself and the members of the Stalinist "Troika." Trotsky operated along several lines, which, however, formed an organic unit. One was that of concealing his knowledge of the existence of the conspiracy for power which had been set afoot amongst the renegade leaders. Trotsky was partner to a conspiracy to sabotage Lenin's plans for reorganizing the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection which Stalin had made a center of his bureaucratic wire-pulling. On January 24, 1923, Trotsky was present at a meeting of the renegade Politburo which deliberated concealing Lenin's article, "How We Should Reorganise The Workers' And Peasants' Inspection." He observed the outrageous machinations of the plotters, including the malicious proposal of one of Stalin's henchmen, Kuibyshev, to bamboozle the sick Lenin by showing him a specially printed copy of Pravda which would contain his article while the rest of this issue of Pravda would omit it so that it would be hidden from the masses. (See THE STALIN SCHOOL OF FALSIFICATION, page 72.) For many years Trotsky concealed this piece of Stalinist treachery from the toilers, and, in fact, when Max Eastman in 1925, having chanced upon some knowledge of it, made it known to the workers, Trotsky promptly came to the rescue of the Stalinist plotters by slandering Eastman's truthful revelations as lies. (See Trotsky's statement on Eastman, Inprecorr, Sept. 3, 1925.) The Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, naturally, with Trotsky's aid remained a hotbed of Stalinist machinations.

For the XII Party Congress scheduled to meet in April 1923, Lenin had written comprehensive documents against Stalin which he gave to Trotsky who agreed to--(i.e., fed Lenin the story that he would) - present them at the Congress. These documents were intended to lay the ground for the annihilation of Stalin as a political power. At the XII Congress, Trotsky not only voted with the Stalin clique to suppress Lenin's anti-Stalinist documents, but voted in general for all the fraudulent Stalinist resolutions. The Stalinist Central Committee, in the absence of Lenin, amidst loud hurrahs from the mob of renegades who packed the Congress, proclaimed itself the

\*See THE BULLETIN of the LENINIST LEAGUE, U.S.A.

continuer of the Leninist line. To this mockery of Leninism, not only did Trotsky not voice the remotest opposition but, on the contrary, he gave it his unreserved acquiescence. "All our resolutions have been adopted unanimously," exulted Zinoviev, Stalin's ally in the "Troika." (Pravda, April 26, 1923. Our emphasis.)

Faced toward the end of 1923 by the developing German revolution, Trotsky, by then well along in his collaboration with the "Troika," faithfully carried out the Stalinist "Comintern" line. Together with the Stalin clique, Trotsky foisted the policy of coalition with the Social-Democracy upon the revolutionary toilers of Germany and played a vital part in beheading the German revolution. Though he knew, as he indicated years later, that the leadership of the German "Communist" Party consisted of a pack of bribed flunkys who were leading the German revolution to destruction, Trotsky together with the Stalin clique palmed off these scoundrels on the workers as honest revolutionaries who would lead the revolution to victory.\*

Lenin's recovery at the end of 1923, therefore, meant to Trotsky very much the same thing that it meant to Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev. Lenin would have compared Trotsky's "promises" to fight Stalin and his clique with Trotsky's treacherous actions supporting these renegades against the interests of the toilers. Had Lenin fully recovered and investigated Trotsky's actions at the XII Party Congress and his role in the German situation, it would not have taken him long to realize Trotsky's renegade role. Nothing under the sun could have explained away Trotsky's game of supporting a coalition with German Social-Democracy. The bandit role of German Social-Democracy during the war of 1914-18 and after the October Revolution was too well known even to political children for a man of Trotsky's vast experience to be able to plead that he made a mistake. Trotsky's actions would have been understood by Lenin in their entirety as collaboration with Stalin, a traitor with whom Lenin had already broken off all relations, with whom he would not compromise even on a verbally correct policy and whom he had determined to destroy as a menace to the welfare of the toilers. The inevitable consequences to Trotsky are obvious. History reveals that if Stalin did assassinate Lenin, he saved Trotsky's neck just as much as his own.

Had the Stalin clique not entered upon a path of trying to wipe out Trotsky, their early partner, and to centralize all power in their own clutches, naturally, Trotsky would never have been put into the position of having to appear - for his own self-protection - as an "anti-Stalinist." The centralizing process instigated by the Stalinist "Troika," a process which represented a plot within a plot, forced upon Trotsky, now an ex-Stalinist bureaucrat, the need to appear in the light of putting up some kind of resistance to Stalin and his gang. Such an article as, "DID STALIN POISON LENIN?", would never have appeared from the pen of Trotsky if he had remained within the circle of victorious conspirators. Today, obviously, Stalin has nothing to fear from such an article. To the millions of Stalinist workers, it can be easily palmed off by the Stalinist bureaucrats as simply the "raving" of a "fascist" now virtually "insane" with hatred against the land of "victorious socialism" and its leader, Stalin, the "greatest disciple of Lenin."

Those workers, however, who have come to some extent to understand the counter-revolutionary nature of Stalinism have much to learn from such an article. This article must be put in its proper place in the complete Trotskyist system. Something of value can be learned from it only if the

\*See "Shachtman As An Historian," THE BULLETIN, Jan. 1940, pp. 24-26.

true story of Stalinism is known, its origin, its history and its method of operation. Above all, the real role of Trotsky in the Stalinist conspiracy must be known in order to grasp the real significance of Trotsky's article, "DID STALIN POISON LENIN?"

Workers who follow Trotsky or have followed him will recall how for many years Trotsky painted the Stalin gang as "confused revolutionaries." The basis of Stalinism, Trotsky told the workers, is the "theory" of socialism in one country. It will also be recalled how Trotsky called for support to the Stalinized "Comintern" and "advised" the workers to try to "correct" it. In the light of such an article as "DID STALIN POISON LENIN?" such workers may well ask themselves some questions about Trotsky's past and present.

Let an anti-Stalinist worker ask himself:- What did the poisoning -actual or alleged- of Lenin have to do with "socialism in one country"? Did Stalin want to murder Lenin so as to "build socialism in one country"? The "theory" of socialism in one country was announced by Stalin in the Fall of 1924. But it was by the beginning of 1923, according to Trotsky's allegations, that Stalin was already revolving in his mind the idea of assassinating Lenin. It is obvious that Stalin was not at all a "confused revolutionary" who suffered from a failure to "understand Leninism." On the contrary, Stalin understood Lenin and his tendency very well. Indeed, Stalin realized that "Only Lenin's death could clear the way for him," writes Trotsky in "DID STALIN POISON LENIN?" In what respect could Lenin's death clear the way for Stalin? Was it for Socialism? Trotsky gives quite a different answer:- "Stalin was after power, all of it, come what might." (ibid., our emphasis.) This, in fact, is the crux of the Stalinist form of opportunism. A mad thirst after power to be obtained at all costs, however criminal, however inimical to the interests of the toilers, is what moved the Stalin gang, and not a desire for Socialism. Not "theoretical" propositions, but assassination of Lenin, the stumbling block in his plot for bureaucratic autocracy, formed the essence of Stalin's tendency, as we gather from this article of Trotsky's. This tendency was that of a conscious renegade, a person who feared, dreaded - not "misunderstood" - Leninism. The factor of consciousness in the origin of Stalinist opportunism is fundamental. The Stalin clique and its collaborators were criminals and they knew it. They had to be understood by the advanced toilers not as "confused revolutionaries" but as traitors who feared and hated the revolutionary proletariat as they feared and hated Lenin, the workers' foremost leader.

This, however, was not the picture of Stalinism that Trotsky passed before the eyes of the toilers. In Trotsky's lingo, the band of assassins who formed the Central Committee of the degenerated "Bolshevik" Party was "our Bolshevik Central Committee." Solid support to these renegades was what Trotsky urged upon the workers. After the XIII Party Congress which was held in May 1924, i.e., after Lenin's death (assassination?), this was the line Trotsky offered the workers:- "After the XIII Congress there grew up or became more clearly defined new problems of economic, Soviet and international character. The aspiration to counterpose any kind of 'program' to the work of the Central Committee in the task of solving these questions was absolutely alien to me." (L. Trotsky, Pravda, January 20, 1925. Our emphasis.) One may well ask:- What was the "work" that the "Central Committee" (i.e., the Stalin gang of political bandits) was doing in the economic, Soviet and international fields to which Trotsky counterposed no program of any kind? In the Soviet field, the Stalin gang was rapidly transforming all organs of State into feed-bags for the

bureaucrats. In the international field, the Stalin gang was bringing to a close its betrayal of the German revolution for that period and was preparing the basis for the betrayal of the Chinese revolution which came to a head in 1925-27. ("In passing" the Stalinist plotters sold out the British workers in the General Strike of 1926.) We may add some remarks about the "work" of the "Central Committee" in the Party field, to which not only did Trotsky not offer any genuine opposition but, on the contrary, gave strong support. In the spring of 1924, the Stalin clique inaugurated its "Lenin Levy" in the course of which at one stroke it packed the Party with over a quarter of a million hand-picked flunkies and completed the transformation of the former Bolshevik Party into a Stalinist machine. This packing maneuver was hailed by Trotsky as "the highest democracy, highest voting; this is not parliamentary charlatanism, not parliamentary deception, but a genuine democratic workers' vote." (Pravda, April 15, 1924.)

Again and again, Trotsky urged loyalty to Stalin's Central Committee. In August 1927, for example, Trotsky cried to the workers:- "We will carry out all the decisions of the Communist (sic!) Party and of its Central Committee." (Inprecorr, Aug. 18, 1927, p. 1078.) An anti-Stalinist worker will inquire:- What decisions, what policies could the band of renegades who formed Stalin's "Central Committee" have had but such as would conceal their crimes and preserve and strengthen their usurped power? What decisions, what policies, therefore, could this "Central Committee" have had that an honest revolutionary worker could in justice be urged to support? The answer is categorically:- None! Any support to Stalin and his "Central Committee" meant - and means today - support to Stalinist criminality. And Trotsky's policy of urging support to the Stalin gang gathered in the renegade "Central Committee" was precisely support to Stalinist criminality.

Stalin is politically - and very probably even physically - a murderer of Lenin. When Trotsky years after the above events shouted:- "Vote for Foster and Ford!" (The Militant, July 2, 1932) and "Vote for Thaelmann, the Candidate of the C.P.G." (ibid., April 30, 1932), he was in effect urging the workers to give support to the bribed international agents of the renegade who from one angle or another is an assassin of Lenin and of Bolshevism. Clearly, when Trotsky dangled before the eyes of the workers the idea of "correcting" Stalin and his gang, he was not the naive, mistaken person he may now appear to some workers who look back over the scene. Only if Stalin was really the "confused revolutionary" that Trotsky made him out to be, could the notion of "correcting" him and his henchmen possibly be the result of some sort of naïvete. Trotsky knew that Stalin was not a "confused revolutionary." Trotsky knew that Stalin and his henchmen were not suffering from a failure to "understand Leninism." Trotsky knew that Stalin and his allies were a criminal crew of usurping plotters. Trotsky's story of Stalin the "confused revolutionary" who had to be "corrected" was simply the deliberate fabrication with which Trotsky camouflaged the fact that he was urging support to what he knew to be conscious renegacy.

A plot to usurp power in the workers state - this and this alone is the essence of the origin of Stalinism. From this conspiracy was derived the entire Stalinist counter-revolution. The creation of a huge privileged bureaucracy within the Soviet Union and the deliberate conversion of the Comintern into a machine to prevent revolution internationally were ramifications of the plot of the renegade leaders to make their power supreme and permanent. The counter-revolution of the Stalinist bureaucrats constitutes the specific technique of their struggle for self-protection against the masses. The usurpation of power could be effected



only by crushing the revolutionary advances of the toilers, for such advances meant the annihilation of all forms of oppression, including Stalinism. The unique feature of the Stalinist plot for power, the feature wherein it differed from all previous plots of this variety, was that the usurping leaders made a workers state the theatre of their connivings. This fact aside, the Stalinist conspiracy contained all the features found in the usual run of such plots:- deception of the masses; secrecy; murder; frame-ups; centralization of power; concentration of privilege, and the like.

The Trotskyite leaders, however, deceived their followers into imagining that some sort of a "theory" was the basis and the source of Stalinism's counter-revolution:- "The central theory of Stalinism, around which revolve or from which emanate all the false policies which it defends, is the idea of 'socialism in one country.'" (The Militant, Oct. 8, 1932.) The basis of Stalinism, Trotsky told the workers, is the "theory" of socialism in one country. Thus, Trotsky hid the fact that the basis of Stalinism was in actuality the plot to usurp power - in which plot he was himself fully implicated. In reality, the "theory" of socialism in one country was merely a rosy mirage to deceive the masses as well as a part of the attack on Trotsky by the "Troika" and was purely a frame-up technique. The effort of the "Troika" was to blacken Trotsky's reputation and to camouflage their destruction of him with a trumped-up atmosphere of "theoretical polemics." By shouting that they were going to "build socialism in one country," the Stalin clique put every one who opposed them in the light of being opposed to "building socialism." The "theory" of socialism in one country was simply a trick, a factional maneuver or irrelevancy which was used as a bludgeon against Trotsky in the intrigue for bureaucratic power. At one crucial point, Trotsky actually imparted a small bit of information which shows that he knew that the entire noise about "Trotskyism" was deliberately cooked-up by the Stalin gang as part of the plot for power. After Stalin had double-crossed and broken down his former partners of the "Troika," Zinoviev and Kamenev, the former told Trotsky in plain words the fake character of the "polemics" conducted by the conspirators:- "Comrade Zinoviev said: 'We must acknowledge what happened. It was a struggle for power. The trick was to combine the old differences with new questions. For this 'Trotskyism' was invented....'" (THE SUPPRESSED TESTAMENT OF LENIN, p. 44. Our emphasis.) In a word, the Stalinist "theories" were out-and-out frauds in which the conspirators themselves did not take the slightest stock, let alone derive their policies. They were tricks, inventions, maneuvers, dust thrown into the eyes of the masses to blind them to the conscious renegacy which afflicted the leaders of the Soviet Union.

Yet Trotsky deceived the toilers into imagining that the Stalinist assassins took their fake "theories" seriously! More, he led his followers to believe that Stalin's policies were derived from these "theories." It was by this means that Trotsky was able to palm off Stalin and his creatures as "confused revolutionaries" whose organizations were to be "corrected" and meanwhile supported. Trotsky gave the toilers the impression that the Stalin gang wanted revolution but did not know how to achieve it. In actuality, of course, the criminal Stalin and his crew feared revolution and consciously and strenuously struggled to prevent it. By clouding the fact that a villainous plot to usurp power was the origin, the basis and the essence of Stalinism, Trotsky could trick his followers into giving support to conscious counter-revolution.

Because of his original direct collaboration, his bloc with the Stalin clique of conspirators, Trotsky is bound to Stalinism with historical chains which cannot be broken. A new revolutionary party can be built only on the basis of an understanding of the true course of the degeneration of the old Comintern. Such an understanding means the revelation of Trotsky's role as a political collaborator of Stalin and the consequent destruction of Trotsky as a political figure. From time to time Trotsky may throw out hints here and there of what actually happened in the Stalinist degeneration, but fundamentally he must continue to distort the real, full nature of Stalinism and continue to give it support. Trotsky's post-revolutionary system of opportunism has undergone an enormous evolution since its beginnings in 1922-23. Today, Trotsky can even with safety issue hints that Stalin poisoned Lenin. The Trotskyite press can write: "Stalin fears the proletariat above all." (The Socialist Appeal, Mar. 30, 1940) Nevertheless, these seemingly powerful attacks on Stalinism still function the way all the "anti-Stalinism" of Trotsky has always functioned, as a camouflage of his fundamentally pro-Stalinist line.

What is the character of Trotsky's pro-Stalinist line in the present period? Obviously with all the workingclass blood that has passed over the scene due to Stalin's crimes in the past eighteen years, Trotsky could not simply keep on shouting that the Stalinist bureaucrats are "confused revolutionaries" who must be "corrected" while supported. After Stalin and his collaborators opened the door for Hitler to come to power in 1933, Trotsky, to hold his followers and to continue to tie them onto the Stalinist system, was forced to adopt a new device. This device is his sham "Fourth International," which is in reality a satellite of the Stalinist gang.

One basic aspect of the opportunist, pro-Stalinist line of Trotsky's "Fourth International" is to be found in its position on the question of the defense of the Soviet Union. In line with his entire role in the Stalinist conspiracy, Trotsky, under the cover of what looks like a great deal of criticism, ascribes to the counter-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy a progressive role in the defense of the Soviet Union. "The role of the Soviet bureaucracy remains a dual one. Its own interests constrain it to safeguard the new economic regime created by the October revolution against enemies at home and abroad. This work remains historically necessary and progressive." (The Kirov Assassination, p. 12) To safeguard the economic conquests of the October revolution is clearly Bolshevik work, the work of a proletarian revolutionary force. If, as Trotsky says, the Stalinist bureaucracy can carry out such work, obviously it deserves the support of the toilers. Accordingly, Trotsky states: "With the Left Opposition, we declared many times we will sustain Stalin and his bureaucracy, and we repeat it now. We will sustain Stalin and his bureaucracy in every effort it makes to defend the new form of property against imperialist attacks." (The Case of Leon Trotsky, p. 282) In the Trotskyist line, the defense of the proletarian power is somehow identified with the defense of Stalin, as can be gathered from this statement of Trotsky's: "The workers must fight for their existence and their power. When they want power, they must defend by violence their power against violence. In that sense we say that if the former ruling class and the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries attack the Soviet state, we will attack them with all our vigor and defend Stalin in that respect." (Ibid., p. 386. Our emphasis - L.L.)

A thinking anti-Stalinist worker must analyze this position carefully. Does he in his own mind throw the defense of the Soviet Union and the defense of Stalin into the same category? Is the defense of the Soviet Union a defense of Stalin in any respect; is the defense of Stalin identifiable or compatible with a defense of the Soviet Union? What is the real relation of these two elements?

Only in the system of Stalin-Trotsky is the defense of the Soviet Union of the same order or in the same category as a defense of Stalin or any support to Stalin. In the system of Leninism, the defense of the Soviet Union, as well as the defense of the interests of the world proletariat as a whole, means first and foremost the destruction of Stalin, his bureaucracy and his tendency in the international working class. The Soviet Union and the world proletariat can be defended against the bourgeoisie and their opportunist agents only if first Stalinism is wiped out. Prior to the elimination of Stalinism from the international proletariat, there can be no victory of the workers over the bourgeoisie, regardless of whether the struggle takes place between the Soviet Union and the bourgeois countries or in the bourgeois lands themselves. The Stalinist bureaucracy does not play any progressive role or carry out or participate in any progressive function whatsoever. Trotsky's fabrication of a "progressive role" for the Stalinist bureaucracy is an organic part of his consistent support to Stalinism since its origin. The Stalinist bureaucracy has but one role: - to undermine the Soviet Union and lay the basis for its eventual destruction by politically paralyzing the workers in the Soviet Union itself and internationally. Only the revolutionary proletariat can defend the Soviet Union. Stalin can plunge the toilers into all kinds of military adventures "against" the imperialists, but because his political line remains to paralyze the international proletariat, his military "struggle" remains an organic part of that paralyzing policy, an integral aspect of it. The defense of the Soviet Union requires a Bolshevik leadership; and this can be re-created only in terms of destroying Stalinism. It is this factor which makes the prior overthrow of Stalinism absolutely essential to a defense of the Soviet Union. Based on political counter-revolution, Stalin's military operations can lead the toilers only to appalling, perfectly fruitless sacrifices and to defeat, and the Soviet Union only to final destruction. Such is the character of Stalin's "defense" of the Soviet Union. Only the enemies of the toilers will support such a "defense." Revolutionary workers will strive to prevent Stalin from "defending" the Soviet Union by destroying Stalinism and liberating the international proletariat for a genuine defense of the Soviet Union.

To their immeasurable injury, millions of toilers of the Soviet Union and internationally imagine that by fighting under Stalinist leadership they can really defend the Soviet Union against the world bourgeoisie. This illusion, however, plagues not just the mind of the pro-Stalinist workers but also that of most subjectively anti-Stalinist workers who consider themselves Marxists. Naturally, the subjectively anti-Stalinist worker gives this illusion an "anti-Stalinist" coloration. He believes that the thing to do is to fight under Stalinist leadership and then when, as he imagines, the workers have defeated the bourgeoisie, to turn around and wipe out Stalin and his bureaucracy. Such a worker overlooks the fact that under Stalinist - i.e., treacherous, criminal, counter-revolutionary — leadership it is not possible for the workers to defeat the bourgeoisie. Does Trotsky clarify him on this point? Quite the contrary, in accord with his pro-Stalinist role, Trotsky reinforces the illusions of the subjectively anti-Stalinist worker. Trotsky gives him this thesis: "In the Soviet Union, I would try to be a good soldier, win the sympathy of the soldiers, and fight well. Then, at a good moment, when victory is assured, I would say: 'Now we must finish with the bureaucracy.'" (Ibid.,

p. 289) We observe that, according to Trotsky, the worker is to fight, the possibility of victory is to be assured and then when that happens he is to finish with the bureaucracy. But clearly, since the finishing with the bureaucracy is put after the victory over the bourgeoisie, this victory is to be attained, so Trotsky "teaches," under Stalinist leadership. Hence, Trotsky's "good soldier" thesis should read -- taking his position in its entirety: - In the Soviet Union I will fight under Stalin's leadership, I will defend and support Stalin in his "defense" of the Soviet Union, I will aid Stalin to "defeat" the international bourgeoisie and then I will settle with Stalin and his bureaucracy. This is the deadly trap that Trotsky sets for his followers. The Leninist thesis, as opposed to Trotsky's, is: - First I must destroy Stalinism and re-create a new Bolshevik leadership or I will never have any victory over the bourgeoisie. The idea of Stalinism's having any progressive role in the genuine defense of the Soviet Union is a dangerous myth peddled by Stalin-Trotsky and those under their influence. The first task is to break with the entire Stalinist system, including Trotsky as part of that system, and to reorganize the proletarian vanguard in a new Bolshevik Party and International.

BREAK WITH THE ENTIRE STALINIST SYSTEM INCLUDING TROTSKY AS PART OF THAT SYSTEM - this is the necessary preliminary to re-creating a new revolutionary party. Unless the Stalinist cancer is destroyed, the paralysis of the proletarian vanguard will continue and the forward march of bourgeois reaction will reach stages unimaginably more oppressive than even the present. It is above all and in the first instance the subjectively anti-Stalinist revolutionary workers to whom history presents the task of examining scientifically and in its entirety the story of the rise of Stalinism. The role of Trotsky in that reactionary development must be learned in its true form. Only then will it be clear why he did not tell the Russian workers in 1922-23 what he knew was going on amongst the degenerated leaders of the Politburo behind the back of Lenin and the masses. Only then will it be clear why it is that sixteen years after the events in connection with the origin of Stalinism Trotsky still issues no more than infinitesimal bits of what he knows about the story of the Stalinist conspiracy, why for so many years he has been suppressing the anti-Stalinist documents written by Lenin which he has in his possession (Lenin's letters on the National question, etc.) Above all, only then will it be clear why Trotsky is careful to camouflage even those minute bits with an elaborate and subtle myth about the "progressive role" of Stalinism, about the need to support Stalin's "defense" of the Soviet Union.

Examination, study and discussion - these are the requirements of advanced workers today. A CALLING TO ACCOUNTS OF TROTSKY for his many years of silence and for his support to the renegade assassin Stalin - this is the start of the real work in building a new revolutionary party.

Participate in the work to establish the true character of all the political currents functioning under the guise of "Bolshevism" in the proletarian ranks today. Only on the basis of an understanding of these currents can a new revolutionary party be created. When Trotsky or Shachtman or Oehler offers himself as the leader of the tendency for a new revolutionary party, let the thinking revolutionary worker investigate the past and present of these leaders to determine whether they are actually creating a new party or whether they have reasons to prevent such a creation.

In studying the case of Trotsky, the revolutionary worker will be able to unfold the whole story of the Stalinist conspiracy and will find

Trotsky's guilty fingerprints at every crucial stage. Shachtman has to account for many years of "work" as a faithful flunkey of Trotsky's, who assisted him in executing his every crime. A knowledge of Shachtman's role in the Stalinist degeneration will prevent workers from falling into the trap of mistaking Shachtman's bickering with Cannon for bureaucratic power as a genuine revolutionary development. Shachtman's "Workers Party" will be understood as merely the organizational form eventually taken by Shachtman's machinations for bureaucratic control. Oehler will have to explain away why he so tenaciously insists that up to 1934 Trotsky was a Marxist. Analytical revolutionary workers will not be long in drawing the inference which stares them in the face in the fact that up to 1934 Oehler was with Trotsky not only politically, but also organizationally. From many angles, the entire pseudo-Bolshevik system will have to be settled with by the advanced workers who already realize the need for a new party before the struggle for proletarian liberation can again take the form it achieved in October 1917.

With a new revolutionary party created through the process of cleaning the whole pseudo-Bolshevik virus out of the veins of the proletarian vanguard, the path to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie will again be opened.

LENINIST LEAGUE, U.S.A.

August 4, 1940

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FOR FURTHER MATERIAL AND PROOF OF TROTSKY'S ROLE AS A COLLABORATOR OF STALIN, READ THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES IN :-

THE BULLETIN

of the

LENINIST LEAGUE, U.S.A.

TROTSKY'S "FIGHT" AGAINST STALIN  
 CANNON'S "CLEAN" BANNER  
 TROTSKY, THE UKRAINE AND THE OEHLERITES  
 SHACHTMAN AS AN "HISTORIAN"  
 TROTSKY AND SHACHTMAN VS. HISTORY  
 "UNCONDITIONAL DEFENSE OF THE U.S.S.R." (An Examination of the Trotskyite Line.)  
 THE MOTIVES OF ZINOVIEV AND KAMENEV

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